


<p>CRIME PREVENTION & COMMUNITY RELATIONS</p>	 <p>YAVAPAI COUNTY <i>Arizona</i> SHERIFF'S OFFICE <i>Serving Since 1864</i></p>	<p>AUTO THEFT</p> <p>1Page</p>
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Taking precautionary measures can minimize your chances of becoming the victim of auto theft.

In the United States a vehicle is stolen an average of every 21 minutes. Not only does auto theft costs the victim time and money, but it cost society, because it drives insurance premiums up and many times stolen vehicles are used to commit other crimes.

Car thefts seem to occur with greater frequency where large groups of cars are parked for extended periods of time in places such as shopping centers, colleges, sporting events, movie complexes, and large apartment complexes. Car thefts can occur anytime -- at random on different days of the week and times of the day, depending on the locations.

Below are some tips you can use to avoid being the victim of a car thief:

- Never leave your car running unattended, even to dash into a business, store, etc.;
- Never leave any keys in the car or ignition, inside a locked garage, or in hide-a-key boxes;
- Always roll up your windows and lock the car, even if it is parked in front of your home;
- Never leave valuables in plain view, even if your car is locked. Put them in the trunk out of sight;
- Always park in high-traffic, well-lighted areas, when possible;
- Install a mechanical device that locks the steering wheel, column, or brakes. These devices will deter some criminals;
- Investigate the purchase of a vehicle theft tracking/security system, especially if you own one of the frequently stolen model vehicles;
- Never leave personal identification documents, vehicle ownership title, or credit cards in your vehicle;
- If you must leave your key with a valet, attendant, or mechanic leave only the ignition key. Make sure you are dealing with a reputable firm.
- In high theft areas the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) should be etched on windows, doors, fenders and trunk lid. This makes it difficult for a thief to market your stolen car parts.
- Copy your license plate and vehicle information (VIN) numbers on a card and keep them with you. If your vehicle is stolen, the police will need this information to take a report; and,
- Many vehicles today come with some type of security system from the factory. Normally there are upgraded systems available if you ask. The best choices are systems that shut off the fuel supply so that a car can't be started or driven.
- If your vehicle is stolen, report it to the police immediately.